AMENDMENTS

Prior to considering the arguments discussed below, please make the following amendments to the claims.

In the Specification

Please replace the paragraph on page 6 beginning at line 13 with the following:

Separating the various panels or side regions described above are a series of junctures or seams. For instance, a first juncture 212 is defined between top panel 202 and body side 210. Second seams or junctures 214 are similarly disposed along lines or region between the outer side 208 and the two lateral sides 206. A third juncture or seam 216 defines a transition region between the bottom panel 204 and the outer side 208, and a fourth juncture or seam 218 is disposed generally between the outer side 208 and the top panel or side 202.

A1

Please replace the paragraph at page 11 beginning on line 1:

Side support member distal end 420 is shown in Figure 3 as connected to the distal end 320 of shoulder support member 300, permanently (e.g., by stitching as shown in Figure 3) or releasably (such as by a hook and loop type fastener, an adjustable buckle, or the like). The shoulder strap 300 and side strap 400 distal ends can be connected so to form the appearance of a continuous strap.

A2

Please replace the paragraph at page 13 beginning on line 13 with:

Another method for increasing the stiffness of the bottom panel 204, useable singly or in combination with any of the features described above, is by adding one or more bottom straps or members 500. Figures 3-4, 4A, and 6-9 show a configuration in which two such bottom straps 500 are used.

A3

Please replace the paragraph at page 17 beginning on line 13 with:

Such support members can have the variety of configurations and forms as described above with respect to bottom support members 570. Note a desirable configuration shown in Figures 3 and 7. In this embodiment, top support members 640 each has a proximal end 670 connected to top side 202 and a distal end 660 which is slidingly or permanently connected to the top strap 600 via an attached D-ring or similar loop.

A4

Please replace the paragraph at page 18 beginning at line 3 with:

These and other top support member 640 arrangements, all of which are within the scope of the invention, help support the load borne by the wearer and assist the top straps in keeping the body 200 square at the top and keeping the bookpack high relative to the wearer's shoulders. Due to the downward force acting on the top support members 640, these members are placed under stress as they assist in bearing the load of body 200 at their distal end 660 where they engage top straps 600. It is therefore important that the point of connection between the distal end 660 of top support member 640 and top strap 600 be designed for durability and load-bearing functionality. This can be accomplished by reinforcing the top support member distal end 660 (by, e.g. affixing additional material), etc. In addition, a low-friction abrasion-resistant coating can be placed on either or both the distal end 640 and top strap 600 where they directly interface to prevent binding and to protect the materials from abrasion damage.

A5

In the Claims

Please enter the following new claims: